

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO -1728
ANSWERED ON - 16/03/2022

PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR MANUAL SCAVENGING

1728. SHRI N.R. ELANGO

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether age-old methods of manual scavenging and cleaning of septic tanks and sewers still exist in our country; and
- (b) if so, the details of the initiative(s) taken by Government keeping in mind that it is high time the authorities take pragmatic steps to abolish such practices and effectively implement modern techniques?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE)

- (a) No Sir, there is no verified report of people currently engaged in manual scavenging in the country. However, manual cleaning of septic tanks and sewers is being resorted to in some areas.
- (b) A National Policy for mechanized Sanitation Eco-system has been formulated in consultation with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Department of Drinking water and Sanitation which envisages, inter alia, the following:
 - i. Appointment of Responsible Sanitation Authority in every District.
 - ii. Setting up of Sanitation Response Unit (SRU) in each municipality.
 - iii. Equipping SRUs with necessary devices, machines and vehicles required for mechanized cleaning.
 - iv. Professionally trained manpower for mechanized cleaning.
 - v. 24x7 helpline to receive complaints regarding blockage of sewers and septic tanks.
 - vi. Setting up facilities for evacuation, transportation and treatment of sludge from septic tanks.
 - vii. Training to the staff of municipalities and contractors in the mechanized cleaning of sewers/septic tanks.

2. The following measures have been taken to promote 100% mechanization, specially cleaning of sewers, septic tanks, desilting of drains, garbage lifting, sludge handling, solid and medical waste disposal etc. and for the benefit of sanitation workers (including waste pickers) and their dependants to provide sustainable livelihood:-

- i. Under the Swachhta Udyami Yojana (SUY) concessional loans are provided to sanitation workers and their dependants and the urban local bodies for procurement of sanitation related equipments, machines and vehicles costing upto Rs. 50.00 lakh. The Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) has been revised from 2020-21 to provide capital subsidy upto Rs. 5.00 lakh to sanitation workers and their dependants for sanitation related projects.
- ii. Under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programme, free short duration upskilling training is provided to the sanitation workers. The candidates are trained about mechanized cleaning and safety precautions for safe and healthy cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.
- iii. Workshops are organised with officers, engineers, sanitary inspectors, supervisors, contractors and sanitation workers etc. of urban local bodies and authorities responsible for cleaning of sewers and septic tanks. During the workshops the participants are made aware about the provisions under the "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013", the rules framed thereunder and other provisions for safe and healthy cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.
